

Parting Gift

by loveless801

Category: HakuÅ•ki/è-„æ;æé¼¼

Genre: Drama, Tragedy

Language: English

Characters: Hijikata T., Okita S.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2012-05-23 15:36:50

Updated: 2012-05-23 15:36:50

Packaged: 2016-04-26 20:27:20

Rating: T

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,072

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: An alternate ending of episode 6/18 of the Haukoki series where in Okita dies with his feelings for Hijikata unsaid.

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by Yushi

I sat on my futon as my emerald eyes look up to the moon through the open shoji doors of my quarters. The sky was beautiful, cloudless and the moon shined down on everything with its heavenly glow, without the exemption of my pale skin of course. My eyes lowered themselves and I looked at my hands. I have heard of Kondo's death and it gave me a shock that Hijikata wasn't able...to save him. The head of Shinsengumi, how could he? Anger was running through my veins and I have come to a decision that I will have this talk with him. Even if it means that I'll push my body to the limits, it's not worth much anyway anymore.

I rode my way toward where Hijikata and the other's were. It would probably be a shock for them too to find that I'm following them. Well not really following them but still. As the night dawned on me, I found Hijikata and was able to confront him yet why wouldn't he respond? Tell me the truth! There really was nothing going to shock me more than anything or nothing could hurt more deeply than what happened to Kondo. My hand connected with Hijikata's clothes and I pulled hard. I was shouting and I didn't care if someone could hear me. I wanted answers, and I want them now. That was when Chizuru entered the picture and the answers I wanted to get went downhill. I moved my eyes to the bandage near Hijikata's neck and I realized that he truly is injured. Taking my hand off him I walked off only to find Saito there as well. We stared at each other for a second but I kept walking with Chizuru following behind me.

My steps quickened and yet she kept calling out for me. This was one thing I totally love and hate about her; her perseverance. It was one of her qualities that made the Shinsengumi love her. Chizuru kept calling out to me and yet here I am trying my best to ignore her and that was when I felt that all too familiar pain that emitted from my chest. I fell on my knees and I started coughing. I heard her call my name and move towards me yet I stopped her. I don't want her to see me in this kind of state. Especially now that she started telling me how Hijikata wanted to be Kondo's shield. I understood everything yet I can't seem to remove the anger that's flowing in my veins. I told her what Kondo was to me. He was irreplaceable. And yet her I admitted to her that Hijikata could indeed take the lead for the Shinsengumi.

"I probably won't be able to forgive him." I said to her. "So please take care of him, Chizuru-chan." I continued before leaving.

It was a lie. I could always forgive him. I understood everything it's just that I can't seem to remove the deep feeling of loss right now.

The following day I looked for them and found them in one of the inns at the outskirts of town. I guess things are already growing harder for Hijikata. I walked away from the place and to a shrine where kids were playing. As I sit on the uppermost step of the shrine I watched them play. The kids were oblivious to my presence so it seems. Until a ball rolled towards me.

"What are you doing mister?" The girl who followed to retrieve it asked. She resembled Chizuru a lot and another heart wrenching pain flowed through me. I don't know whether it was because I'm going to have a coughing fit or the fact that I might actually be jealous of her. I gently smiled at her and answered; "I don't know myself."

That night I was able to get some shelter from the nearby temple. The place was already deserted of the people and the kids as well, so I didn't have problems to getting around. I lay inside the shrine and was looking up at the moon again. A sigh escaped my lips as I turned to my side. My arm rested underneath my head to act as a pillow. I wanted to tell Hijikata how I felt...though it's impossible now isn't it? A bitter smile came to my lips and I bit back my tears away.

Ever since I was little, I had always looked up to him. I may be a brat and he would get pissed with me yet we always treated each other kindly. Looking out for each other's back and has given care to each other more than anyone. Yet, that...feeling didn't last long. It stopped when Chizuru came around. Alright let me get things straight. I don't hold a grudge against the girl. I'm actually...happy? Well nothing would happen if I did have a relationship with him. And the fact that she's a girl...well it is self explanatory, isn't it?

Another sigh escaped my lips and I turned to my side again. My head was reeling and I winced. Was I thinking too much? Or is it because of my condition? Or probably due to me pushing myself too much? I closed my eyes as I thought again. Where was I? Right I didn't stand a chance against Chizuru. I knew that when Hijikata first saw her

that there was already something that blossomed from within his heart, if there was none he could have just killed her then and there. I liked Chizuru and I don't have any complaints about her. It's just that I couldn't help the jealous feeling that has rooted itself ever since I got nearly bedridden and she started spending more time with Hijikata. I realized that I stood no chance against her. Especially when Hijikata became a rasetu in order to defeat Kazama. Toshi could deny all he want but for my eyes he did it to save Chizuru. It was apparent. He loves her. Though he may not admit it. And here I am following him like a lost dog. How stupid could I have looked huh? A chuckle escaped my lips and I felt sleep nudging at the back of my head, eventually succumbing to it.

It isn't long before I woke up to the sound of whisperings though. There seems to be someone outside. Moving swiftly to the side of the door I pressed my ear to the wall with my katana in hand. Soft murmurs continued on. The conversation they were having was about Hijikata's whereabouts and the fact that there was a group coming this way to attack Toshi. Now what would I care right? But then I'm really the fool who would rather get myself killed for my friend - first love - than save my life. As I said earlier, my life doesn't mean much anyway.

I ended up going to the pass that the men outside talked about. I stood there waiting for the men to march up towards the slope. Pressing my back against the tree I'm hiding at I took in a breath to steady my nerves but it seems to be a wrong action. My chest tightened and I started to convulse from the cough I tried to hold back. Another wrong decision as it hurled me to my knees on the ground. Blood escaped my mouth and I vomited blood. I stared in shock and I knew I really won't last long. Standing while using the tree trunk to steady myself, I looked up to the dark sky and thought of Kondo once more. I thought of how he took care of all of us and then my thoughts shifted to Hijikata. I needed to protect him in order to not let Kondo's death be in vain. I don't want to admit it but I was also doing this out of my love for him. Cheesy, yes, but there's no other way for me to cover it up, no other excuse to use. I brought out one of the bandages I brought and tied it securely around my hand and the handle. Even if I push myself to the limits I would not back down until all of them are dead.

I could feel the adrenaline in my blood, coursing through my veins; one by one bringing my senses to another level. My palms grew sweaty as I foresaw my impending last battle. My possible death and my unsaid feelings towards my senior. What a lonesome and regretful death but I guess it'll be better that way than suffer more in this world.

While making their way towards the path I revealed myself and they immediately showed their hostility by bringing out their guns saying that they won't let anyone stand in their way. Yet I stood by my ground and the bloodbath started as soon as their leader ordered to fire openly.

The battle continued on. It felt as if it was endless, the men kept coming and the sound of blade slashing flesh kept on repeating. I was growing weaker and yet I continued. Even when they ganged up on me I continued on. I was weak and hurt but I hardly let it obscure my goal. A sneak attack was used on me and I felt the blade of one of the enemy slash its way towards my back, sending unimaginable pain

and yet I turned to kill the guy too. As I turned back I was impaled at the stomach with another man's katana. I wrapped my hand around it, this time I definitely felt the pain. I started pulling it out and before the man could counter attack I struck him down with my sword.

As the last man came down I stabbed my sword to the ground to act as a cane. My breath started to slow down, the adrenaline waning off and the fatigue made itself known. The sun was starting to rise too and I stared at it. I knew that I would die. There was no way around it now and somehow I felt happy. I managed to protect Hijikata. This much was enough and yet I wanted more. Maybe to see him one last time; to hear his voice say my name but that's impossible now, huh? I closed my eyes and let my body sink to the floor. I noticed that I am already dying, along with the sunlight chasing away the darkness. It's as if I was a creature of darkness as well but I guess I truly am. I smirk as my breathing slowed, it was certainly near.

And that's when I heard it. That familiar voice.

I tore my eyes open and saw Hijikata standing there. He was also using his katana as a support to stand and his body seems sweaty from the over exertion. I was surprised as to how he knew about it but then we did have some kind of connection. Maybe it was his intuition as well. Whatever it was I thanked the gods for him being there.

"Souji..." he said brokenly as he took in the image of my beaten up body.

"Toshi..." I murmured back. "This is... goodbye..." It was getting harder to breathe. Though it was ironic since I thought I would just disappear.

"Souji..." He repeated again and I felt myself crumble under the concerned tone and the intense gaze he was looking at me with. That's when I realized that I won't be able to hide my feelings anymore.

My eyes began to blurr as I felt tears spill from the side of my eyes. In all honesty I don't want to die yet. I want to stay by his side for a very long time. To be able to protect him but it was impossible now. I gave him a broken smile and my last words as blue flames enveloped my body.

"I've...I've always...loved you...Toshi..."

-OWARI-

End  
file.